Healthy Recipe of the Month: February 2010

**Butter Lettuce, Mint, and Chia Salad**

Chia is an edible seed that comes from a member of the mint family, *Salvia hispanica*. In pre-Columbian times, chia seeds were a component of the Aztec and Mayan diets. Chia seeds have come under the radar recently thanks in part to their rich omega-3 fatty acid profile: they are even higher in omega-3s than flax seeds. Plus, their higher antioxidant content makes them less susceptible to oxidation, meaning they’ll keep fresh longer. Chia seeds are an easy addition to your diet since they do not need to be ground and they can be incorporated into many different dishes: For breakfast, add chia seeds to your cereal - hot or cold. Chia can be added to bread, muffin, pancake, or waffle mixes. Try adding chia seeds to cottage cheese, yogurt, smoothies, or kefir. At lunch and/or dinner add chia seeds to salads, soups, and stews. Incorporate chia into tuna, chicken, or egg salad sandwiches. When added as a topping, chia seeds will keep their nutty flavor and crunch, but when mixed with water and left to sit for a while, the seeds turn gelatinous. Find chia seeds in several local specialty stores – call first to see if they carry them. Here is a favorite salad of mine. I hope you enjoy it!  - Sonnet.

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Recipe from: Sonnet Bingham, MS, dietetic Intern

**Butter Lettuce, Mint, and Chia Salad**

Serves: 2  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Ready in 10 minutes

**Ingredients**

- 1 head of butterhead/bib/boston lettuce  
- 3-4 sprigs of mint  
- Juice of 1/2 -1 Lemon  
- 1 Tbsp. chia seeds  
- (2 Tbsp.) of Parmesan or Romano cheese  
- .5 - 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
- Sea salt and Black Pepper

**Directions**

1. Remove mint leaves from stems  
2. Wash lettuce and mint leaves, spin or pat dry  
3. Toss together in a salad bowl  
4. Juice lemon and mix with olive oil in small bowl, toss with salad mix  
5. Sprinkle chia seeds and shave cheese onto salad  
6. Salt and pepper to taste

**Notes:**

- In Mexico, chia seeds are mixed with lemon or lime juice and sugar for a drink called chia fresca.  
- To make your own chia “jelly” add 1 part chia seeds to 9 parts water and let sit for a half an hour.